Remarks

Amendments have been made to claims 1, 3, 5, 9, 13, 14, and 16. Claims 1 to 16 remain pending in the present application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application in light of the amendments above and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections for Obviousness

Claims 1 to 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious in view of Ishikawa, Japanese Patent No. JP404465908A. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1, as amended, recites in part a finger guard for an electrical circuit breaker including a body with a front face and a rear face, and an opening formed from the front face to rear face. The opening is sized to receive a switch of an electrical circuit breaker. First and second side guards extend from the front face generally perpendicular to the front face and defining opposing sides of the opening. A knock-out is positioned within the opening, and the knock-out being removably attached to the body and substantially blocking the opening. At least one fastener opening extends through the body for mounting the body to a chassis, and at least one fastener opening extends through the body for mounting to a switched electrical circuit breaker with the switch of the circuit breaker.

Ishikawa discloses a finger guard for a circuit breaker. However, the circuit breaker is mounted to a mounting surface 100a and extends through an opening 101a in an openable switchboard door 101. As shown in FIG. 2, opening the door provides access to the different components within the switchboard enclosure. When door 101 is opened, the finger guards remain mounted to the circuit breakers 3. Mounting the guards to the door and to the circuit breaker would require the circuit breaker to be pulled from the mounting surface 100a every time the door is opened to access a breaker, meaning that all circuits within switchboard 100 including a circuit breaker 3 would be disrupted whenever door 101a is opened. Applicants thus submit that Ishikawa teaches away from including a fastener opening for mounting the guard to a circuit breaker as well as a fastener opening for mounting the guard to a chassis.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 1 is not rendered obvious by the cited prior art and that claim 1 is in condition for immediate allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Claims 2 to 4 depend from and further limit claim 1. Claim 3 has been amended to recite in part that the finger guard includes a pair of finger grips which are mounted to outer sides and distal ends opposite the rear face. The objects pointed to by the Examiner as finger grips, ramped tabs on 102b, are positioned toward the rear face of the finger guard are actually configured to mount the finger guard to the circuit breaker. When so mounted, as shown in FIGS. 3 and 4, these tabs are inaccessible when the fiber guard is mounted to the circuit breaker and cannot function as finger grips in this position.

For at least these reasons and those cited above with regard to claim 1, Applicants submit that claims 2 to 4 are not rendered obvious by the cited prior art and that claims 2 to 4 are in condition for immediate allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Claim 5, as amended, recites in part a finger guard for an electrical circuit breaker, the finger guard including a body including a front face and a rear face, and an opening formed from the front face to rear face. The opening is sized to receive a switch of an electrical circuit breaker. First and second side guards on the front face extend generally perpendicular to the front face and define opposing sides of the opening. A top wall and a bottom wall extend from the front face along the top and bottom of the opening and are generally perpendicular to the side guards, defining a substantially rectangular bounded area on the front face positioned about the opening. The top and bottom walls each include a distal edge opposite the rear face and raised ramped finger grips positioned proximate the distal edge, the raised ramped finger grips cooperating to define opposing finger holds. At least one fastener opening extends through the body for mounting the body to an opening in a chassis and at least one fastener opening extends through the body for mounting to a switched electrical circuit breaker with the switch of the circuit breaker extending through the opening into the bounded area.

As noted above with regard to claims 1 and 3, Ishikawa does not teach or suggest that the guard be mounted to the opening through the door and to the circuit breaker, or that the distal ends of the top and bottom walls include opposing finger grips. Without such teaching or suggestion, and the fact that Ishikawa actually teaches away from having a fastener opening for mounting the guard to the opening, the cited prior art cannot anticipate claim 5. Applicants

submit that claim 5 is in condition for immediate allowance, and reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Claims 6 to 8 depend from and further limit claim 5. For at least the reasons recited above with regard to claim 5, Applicants submit that claims 6 to 8 are not rendered obvious by the cited prior art and that claims 6 to 8 are in condition for immediate allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Claim 9, as amended, recites in part a finger guard for an electrical circuit breaker, the finger guard including a body including a front face and a rear face, and an opening formed from the front face to rear face. The opening is approximately rectangular and has a top and a bottom. The opening is sized to receive a switch of an electrical circuit breaker. First and second side guards on the front face extend generally perpendicular to the front face and define opposing sides of the opening. A designation holder is on the front face adjacent to either a top or a bottom of the body for receiving indicia. At least one fastener opening extends through the body for mounting the body to an opening in a chassis and at least one fastener opening extends through the body for mounting to a switched electrical circuit breaker with the switch of the circuit breaker extending into the opening.

As noted above with regard to claims 1 and 5, Ishikawa does not teach or suggest that the guard may be mounted to both the circuit breaker and the opening in the door. Ishikawa teaches away from this construction, as discussed in detail above with regard to claim 1. For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 9 is not rendered obvious by the cited prior art and that claim 9 is in condition for immediate allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Claims 10 and 11 depend from and further limit claim 9. For at least the reasons recited above with regard to claim 9, Applicants submit that claims 10 and 11 are not rendered obvious by the cited prior art and that claims 10 and 11 are in condition for immediate allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Claim 12 recites in part an electrical power distribution system with a chassis including a power input terminal and a power output terminal and enclosing an electrical bus with a mount for a switched electrical circuit breaker. The chassis includes an opening allowing access to the

mount for mounting the circuit breaker, and a finger guard is mounted in the opening. The finger guard includes a body including a front face and a rear face, with an opening formed from the front face to rear face, the opening being sized to receive a switch of an electrical circuit breaker. First and second side guards on the front face extend generally perpendicular to the front face and define opposing sides of the opening. A knock-out is positioned within the opening substantially blocking the opening. At least one fastener opening extends through the body for mounting to a switched electrical circuit breaker with the switch of the circuit breaker extending into the opening.

Ishikawa teaches a finger guard that mounts to the circuit breaker and the circuit breaker positions the finger guard within an opening in the door. In claim 12, the finger guard includes a knock-out positioned across an opening where the circuit breaker would extend if the guard is mounted to the breaker. With the knock-out in place, the guard cannot be mounted to a breaker. The only manner of mounting the guard taught by Ishikawa is that of mounting the guard to the breaker. The only manner of mounting the guard within the opening of the door taught by Ishikawa is to have the guard mounted to the breaker and the breaker positioning the guard within the opening. Thus, with the knock-out in place, the guard of Ishikawa cannot be mounted to a breaker, and without the breaker, the guard of Ishikawa cannot be mounted in the opening of the door.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 12 is not rendered obvious by the cited prior art and that claim 12 is in condition for immediate allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Claim 13, as amended, recites in part an electrical power distribution system with a chassis including a power input terminal and a power output terminal and enclosing an electrical bus with a mount for a switched electrical circuit breaker. The chassis includes an opening allowing access to the mount for mounting the circuit breaker, and a finger guard is mounted in the opening. The finger guard includes a body including a front face and a rear face, with an opening formed from the front face to rear face, the opening being sized to receive a switch of an electrical circuit breaker. First and second side guards on the front face extend generally perpendicular to the front face and define opposing sides of the opening. A top wall and a bottom wall extend from the front face generally perpendicular to the side guards and extend

between the side guards, defining a substantially rectangular bounded area on the front face positioned about the opening. The top and bottom walls each include a distal edge opposite the rear with raised ramped finger grips positioned proximate the distal edges, the raised ramped finger grips cooperating to define opposing finger holds. At least one fastener opening extends through the body for mounting the body to an opening in a chassis and at least one fastener opening extends through the body for mounting to a switched electrical circuit breaker with the switch of the circuit breaker extending through the opening into the bounded area.

As discussed above with regard to claim 1, Ishikawa does not teach that a finger guard may include fastener openings for mounting to a breaker and to an opening, and in fact, teaches away from such a construction as opening the door would remove all the circuit breakers from the bus. As discussed above with regard to claim 3, Ishikawa does not teach or suggest that the guard includes opposing finger grips and what the Examiner has identified as finger grips are actually mounting tabs for mounting the guard to the breaker. No other structure for mounting the guard to the breaker is taught and when the guard is mounted to the breaker by these tabs, the tabs are not accessible for use as opposing finger holds.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 13 is not rendered obvious by the cited prior art and that claim 13 is in condition for immediate allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Claim 14, as amended, recites in part an electrical power distribution system with a chassis including a power input terminal and a power output terminal and enclosing an electrical bus with a mount for a switched electrical circuit breaker. The chassis includes an opening allowing access to the mount for mounting the circuit breaker, and a finger guard is mounted in the opening. The finger guard includes a body including a front face and a rear face, with an opening formed from the front face to rear face, the opening being sized to receive a switch of an electrical circuit breaker. First and second side guards on the front face extend generally perpendicular to the front face and define opposing sides of the opening. A designation holder is on the front face adjacent one of the top or bottom for receiving indicia. At least one fastener opening extends through the body for mounting the body to an opening in a chassis and at least one fastener opening extends through the body for mounting to a switched electrical circuit

breaker with the switch of the circuit breaker extending through the opening into the bounded area.

As discussed above with regard to claim 1, Ishikawa does not teach that a guard include fastener openings for mounting to a breaker and to an opening, and in fact, teaches away from such a construction as opening the door would remove all the circuit breakers from the bus.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 14 is not rendered obvious by the cited prior art and that claim 14 is in condition for immediate allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Claim 15 recites in part a method of mounting a circuit breaker to an electrical power distribution chassis. The method includes providing a power distribution chassis with power input and output terminals connected by a bus. The bus includes a mount for a circuit breaker. The chassis includes a front face with an opening. A protective guard is mounted across the opening in the front face. The protective guard is removed from the opening and a knock-out is removed from an opening in the guard. The guard is mounted to a circuit breaker and the circuit breaker is mounted to the bus within the chassis. The guard is replaced across the opening of the front face of the chassis.

In Ishikawa, the guard cannot be mounted within the opening in the door unless the guard is mounted to a circuit breaker. The guard of Ishikawa cannot be mounted to a circuit breaker with a knock-out closing off the opening of the guard permitting the switch of the circuit breaker to extend outside the door. With the knock-out in place in the opening of the guard, the guard of Ishikawa cannot be mounted in the opening in the front face or the door of the chassis.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 15 is not rendered obvious by the cited prior art and that claim 15 is in condition for immediate allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Claim 16, as amended, recites in part a finger guard for an electrical circuit breaker, the finger guard including a body with a switch guard positioned adjacent to a breaker receiving region defined by the body. A removable portion blocking receipt of the breaker in mounted in the breaker receiving region. The finger guard includes means for directly mounting the breaker

to the body when the removable portion is removed, and means for directly mounting the body to a chassis.

Ishikawa does not teach or suggest that the finger guard includes means for mounting directly to a breaker and to a chassis. The guard of Ishikawa is taught as mounting to the breaker only, and Ishikawa teaches away from mounting the guard to the door. If the guard is mounted to the door and to the breaker, opening the door would remove all of the circuit breakers from the bus, so that Ishikawa teaches away from including means to mount the guard to both the breaker and to the chassis.

For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claim 16 is not rendered obvious by the cited prior art and that claim 16 is in condition for immediate allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Amendment and Response, the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' representative Alan Stewart at 612.371.5376.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 332-5300

Date: October 4, 2004

Alan R. Stewart
Reg. No. 47,974